

Message Text

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PAGE 01 EC BRU 00718 271810Z

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ACTION SIL-01

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07

INR-07 LAB-04 NSAE-00 RSC-01 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06

/047 W

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R 271724Z JAN 75

FM USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8177

INFO AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

AMEMBASSY CARACAS

AMEMBASSY MEXICO CITY

AMEMBASSY LIMA

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: ELAB, ICFTU, CI, XM

SUBJECT: CHILEAN SOCIALIST LEADER MEETS WITH ICFTU LEADERS

1. SUMMARY. ON JANUARY 17, CARLOS ALTAMIRANO, THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE CHILEAN SOCIALIST PARTY, MET WITH OTTO KERSTEN AND OTHER ICFTU OFFICIALS TO DISCUSS ICFTU SUPPORT FOR THE CHILEAN LABOR MOVEMENT IN EXILE (CUT). THE ICFTU AGREED TO SEEK TO INCREASE FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR BOTH EXTERNAL AND CLANDESTINE INTERNAL ACTIVITIES OF CUT. IT IS EXPECTED THAT CHILE WILL BE MADE A PRIMARY ISSUE AT THE ICFTU CONGRESS IN MEXICO CITY NEXT OCTOBER. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JANUARY 17 CHILEAN SOCIALIST PARTY LEADER CARLOS ALTAMIRANO CALLED ON ICFTU GENERAL SECRETARY KERSTEN TO EXPRESS THE GRATITUDE OF THE CHILEAN PEOPLE TO THE ICFTU AND ITS AFFILIATED UNIONS FOR AID EXTENDED SINCE THE OVERTHROW OF THE ALLENDE GOVERNMENT. HE
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PAGE 02 EC BRU 00718 271810Z

ALSO MADE AN APPEAL FOR ADDITIONAL ICFTU FINANCIAL

ASSISTANCE. ACCORDING TO AN ICFTU PRESS RELEASE, KERSTEN TOLD ALTAMIRANO THAT THE ICFTU WOULD CONTINUE ITS SUPPORT FOR CUT. KERSTEN INFORMED THE CHILEAN LEADER THAT THE ICFTU'S COMMITTEE ON CHILE, WHICH MET ON JANUARY 16, HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO SEEK AN INCREASE IN ICFTU AID TO CUT AND TO THE FAMILIES OF CHILEAN WORKERS KILLED OR IMPRISONED DURING AND SINCE THE MILITARY COUP. THE COMMITTEE HAS ALSO ASKED CUT LEADERS TO DRAW UP AN AID PROGRAM PROPOSAL TO HELP IN THE DETERMINATION OF PRIORITIES.

3. THE ICFTU PRESS STATEMENT ALSO REFERRED TO THE ICFTU CONGRESS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN MEXICO CITY IN OCTOBER OF THIS YEAR. IT STATED THAT THE CONGRESS "WILL BRING THE POLITICAL SUPPORT OF THE INTERNATIONAL FREE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT FOR THE WORKERS OF CHILE AND ALL THE AMERICAN PEOPLES WHO HAVE BEEN DEPRIVED OF DEMOCRACY, RIGHT INTO THE HEART OF LATIN AMERICA."

4. ON JANUARY 22, KERSTEN TOLD THE MISSION LABOR ATTACHE THAT THE MEETING WITH ALTAMIRANO WAS "MOST CONSTRUCTIVE." WHEN ASKED IF CUT LEADER LUIS FIGUEROA HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE MEETING, KERSTEN REPLIED THAT HE HAD NOT AND THEN ADDED, "WE PREFER TO DEAL WITH SOCIALISTS." HE SAID THAT ALTAMIRANO WAS ACCOMPANIED BY LUIS MENEZES WHO HEADS A CUT LIAISON OFFICE AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE BELGIAN FGTB. KERSTEN SAID THAT MENEZES, WHO IS FUNDED BY THE ICFTU, IS HIGHLY REGARDED IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION CIRCLES AND IN HIS OPINION IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE CUT LEADER IN EUROPE.

5. FOR SANTIAGO: THE MISSION WOULD APPRECIATE RECEIVING BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON MENEZES.

6. COMMENT: IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT THE ICFTU INTENDS TO CARRY ITS CRUSADE AGAINST THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT OF CHILE INTO ITS CONGRESS AT MEXICO CITY NEXT OCTOBER. THERE ARE ALSO SIGNS THAT THE ICFTU SECRETARIAT AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MAY BE CONTEMPLATING MAJOR OPERA-

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PAGE 03 EC BRU 00718 271810Z

TIONAL AND PERHAPS STRUCTURAL CHANGES IN THE INTER-AMERICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION OF WORKERS (ORIT) AT THE CONGRESS. THE ADDITIONAL FACT THAT THE ICFTU PLANS TO SEND THREE OR FOUR HIGH LEVEL STUDY MISSIONS TO KEY LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES BEGINNING IN MARCH IS INDICATIVE OF MARKEDLY HEIGHTENED ICFTU INTEREST IN THE AREA, AND LEADS US TO CONCLUDE THAT CHANGES WHICH COULD CONCEIVABLY AFFECT U.S. INTERESTS IN THE LABOR

FIELD IN LATIN AMERICA MAY BE IN THE WIND. GREENWALD

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, LABOR RELATIONS, PARTY LEADERS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 27 JAN 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ECBRU00718
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750030-0196
From: EC BRUSSELS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750118/aaaaaqax.tel
Line Count: 116
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SIL
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 09 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <09 APR 2003 by MartinML>; APPROVED <10 APR 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHILEAN SOCIALIST LEADER MEETS WITH ICFTU LEADERS
TAGS: ELAB, CI, MX, ICFTU, CUT, SOCIALIST PARTY, (ALTAMIRANO, CARLOS), (KERSTEN, OTTO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006